

## Changing Socio – Cultural Prospects through DTH in Hubli – Dharwad Region

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### **Abstract**

*Television is undoubtedly the king of entertainment and in the flow of information. The biggest advantage of TV is that, since it is a visual medium, its impact transcends without social, cultural, economical and educational barriers; specially, in a country like India where each one hails from a diverse background. As per the Deloitte study, TV remains a favorite media source for most consumers across age irrespective of domicile: 92% of the respondents rank 'watching TV' as their top media source (Deloitte Study, 2010). Digitization is here to stay. With the present Indian government mooted 'digital India' the beginning of this new revolution is only going to grow by leaps and bounds. As per Media Partners Asia report, 2011, India is the second-largest digitized market in the world with 48 million digital homes, still only around 30 percent of total TV households in the country. This means that, there is a vast scope for growth and expansion of DTH services in Indian sub continent. India has an attractive FDI policy also and thus makes the DTH market more lucrative. DTH is growing at a great pace not only in urban centers but also in rural areas as well. It is thus, pivotal to study the impact of this technology on life and habits of people. Marketing Research firm, Francis Kanoi have claimed that 70% of DTH connections in India are from rural and small towns (Sinha, 2009) challenging all the logic. When we look into the changing space of culture in rural context as satellite television is making direct inroads into rural areas and since India is opening more towards multinational media entrepreneurs and fetching its arms towards digital India where the vision is to get every village connected digitally, television viewing will undergo a sea change and thus will also affect the changing cultural space in the society. The paper is part of the research, which tries to study the socio – cultural impact of DTH technology in rural areas of Hubli-Dharwad region in Karnataka State. This paper will look into the descriptive statistics on socio –cultural impact with the items listed.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Communication has progressed from symbolic drawings of Indus Civilization to Emperor Ashoka's rock edits to phonemic or etymological symbols to much recent finger printing. A significant revolutionary step in the development of written communication was embodied with the invention of the printing press, which allowed a rapid reproduction of written materials. The breakthrough came in with broadcasting which in India can be traced to British period which saw the growth of radio. It was the inexorable television that swept nation with all galore. Television is undoubtedly the king of entertainment and in the flow of information. The biggest advantage of TV is that, since it is a visual medium, its impact transcends without social, cultural, economical and educational barriers; specially, in a country like India where each one hails from a diverse background. This is one medium that is preferred across all sects and region as most popular form of entertainment. A global Deloitte study on 'Media democracy' in 2010 covering 2000 respondents confirms this domination and throws some interesting insights. As per the study, TV remains a favorite media source for most consumers across age irrespective of domicile: 92% of the respondents rank 'watching TV' as their top media source (Deloitte Study, 2010). Digitization is here to stay. Being digital, will bring in the capability to persistently enhance services, which will largely increase the number of channels and enhance the quality of reception. This will also enable the growth of new services

like, pay-per-view, video-on-demand, e-commerce and Internet etc. The picture and sound quality in digital is indisputably superior to that of analogue. With the present Indian government mooted 'digital India' the beginning of this new revolution is only going to grow by leaps and bounds. The major ways today where audiences receive television services are:

- Terrestrial transmission
- Cable TV
- Direct-to-Home (DTH) Satellite
- Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) or Ethernet borne broadband TV

Of all the new digital technologies, the one that has picked up fast and is growing strong is Direct to Home technology popularly addressed as DTH. The DTH service is a digital satellite service that provides television services direct to subscribers anywhere in the country. Since, it makes use of wireless technology, programs are sent to the subscriber's television direct from the satellite, eliminating the need for cables and any cable infrastructure. This is particularly valuable in remote and difficult to reach areas where cable and in many cases, terrestrial television services are poor or nonexistent. The mushrooming of small-sized Ku-band antennae emerging on rooftops not only in metros but also in rural areas reminds us of initial days of Doordharshan when DD antennas mushroomed all over the country. The tempo at which DTH is growing shows the trend where, DTH dish gazing at the sky is bound to escalate in the coming years. Usha Manchanda rightly terms it as 'Invasion from Skies' (Manchanda, 1998).

The total number of TV owning households in India which was estimated at 153 million in 2011 -12 has increased to 168 million in 2014. Out of this, Cable and Satellite households are 145 million and Digital connection households are 78 million as per TAM Media Research 2014. The digital household has seen 8% growth in past one year. The DTH industry is currently pegged at 2.6 million subscribers. The Indian DTH industry is estimated to have clocked revenue of about \$ 1.5 billion in 2012. Hong Kong based research firm, Media Partners Asia has said that, DTH industry revenues will reach \$ 3.9 billion by 2017 and \$ 5.3 billion by 2020 as per the

Bussinessline report in 2013. Currently, DTH penetrates 30 percent of India's 168 million television households. With DTH being easy to access and affordable, its entry to rural markets is swift. As per Media Partners Asia report, 2011, India is the second-largest digitized market in the world with 48 million digital homes, still only around 30 percent of total TV households in the country. This means that, there is a vast scope for growth and expansion of DTH services in Indian sub-continent. India has an attractive FDI policy also and thus makes the DTH market more lucrative.

DTH is growing at a great pace not only in urban centers but also in rural areas as well. It is thus, pivotal to study the impact of this technology on life and habits of people. Marketing Research firm, Francis Kanoi have claimed that 70% of DTH connections in India are from rural and small towns (Sinha, 2009) challenging all the logic. Today, we live in digital world which is constantly altering our lives both public and personnel. This is influencing our ways of communication, learning and understanding the happenings around us. The impact of this technology on our education, politics, art, culture and in all the different aspects of society is deictic. It is not just the digital technology that concerns us but what is more important is that the social change that comes along. This new technology is slowly but steadily changing the way people live their lives. If we look at the TV penetration in the state, as per TAM media research 2014, Karnataka has 87 million TV households. Today, we live in the midst of revolution in communication technologies, which is transforming every aspect of our lives. Its major influence can be seen in our changing cultural and social practices. With DTH being easy to access and affordable, it is entering rural markets quite fast. The wide variety of programmes viewing availability through different channels and the influence it is going to have on the audience cannot be marginalized. It is necessary to study how audience reacts to changing subjects and why they react that way and what influences them in rural context. The paper is part of the research, which tries to study the socio – cultural impact of DTH technology in rural areas of Hubli-Dharwad region. This paper will only look into the descriptive statistics on socio – cultural

impact with the items listed. The whole study is theorized on Albert Bandura's 'Social Learning Theory', which states that, people learn from one another, via observation, imitation, and modeling (Bandura A., 1977). He further adds that, people learn through observing others' behavior, attitudes, and outcomes of those behaviors (Ibid).

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The advent of satellite television in the 1990s is a watershed in the history of television broadcasting in this country as it changed the television landscape forever and led to issues that we are still grappling with. Indian television suddenly became much for entertainment driven (Page and Crawley, 2001; Singhal and Rogers, 2001; Singha, 1998). Various theories and research suggests that mass communication can act as a positive agent of social change for some people while impeding and obstructing change for others (Johnson, 2000). It is seen many research studies which relate to media effect on human psychology where it states that, media creates a psychic mobility among people living in countryside societies in turn, resulting in geographical and social mobility owing to people's longing for modern life and salaried employment of the cities. The image created by media more so of television brings about a longing for change in rural areas. This change in behaviour and attitudes results in change of culture of a society, which slowly adopts new ways and means (Thussu, 2009). There are few popular studies like that of Binod Agrawal, Melissa Butcher, Arjun Appadurai who deal with cultural dimension of transnational television the focus is more on content. There are many research studies that talk of media influence on culture with reference to urban areas like media influence on urban youth in Karnataka, Devdas & Ravi (2013), Firoz (2014) and Jha (2013) speaks of influence of DTH in Delhi Metropolis. When we look into the changing space of culture in rural context as satellite television is making direct inroads into rural areas and since India is opening more towards multinational media entrepreneurs and stretching its arms towards digital India where the vision is to get every village connected digitally, television viewing will undergo a sea change and thus will also affect the changing cultural space in the society.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study used a non-probability Judgement Sampling. This kind of sampling helps, when doing research on a large population where it is impractical to study every single member of the group or when the universe of the research is not known like in the present study. In judgement sampling researcher relies on his or her own judgement when choosing members of population to participate or place in the study. A judgemental sampling is a non-probability sampling method in which the elements preferred for the sample are selected by the judgment of the researchers. The researcher in this study has selected the Hubli - Dharwad region based on certain insights. It is often seen that when we compare the districts of north Karnataka with that of south Karnataka more frequently it is observed that, the south Karnataka fares well in all demographic indicators as compared to north Karnataka. It can also be seen that the rural parts of the south districts are connected with better transport, health and education facilities and a lack of which can be observed in rural parts of north Karnataka districts. Keeping this in mind and after thoroughly examining the performance of districts through their demographic indicators the regions of Hubli - Dharwad was selected which falls in between which is neither outstanding nor poor. The areas selected are; Mansur, Mangundi, Hulkoppa, Navlur and Kusugal. It was also taken into the account that the areas under the study fall within the 10 kms of the city/urban centre. This was done to see whether even after being at such close proximity to that of city, what are the reasons that prompted the residents in these rural areas prefer DTH over the cable connections. The survey method was used to collect the data. For the purpose of the study a survey through a structured questionnaire was carried on among the 400 respondents. The age of respondents is between 18 -70 years and thus excluding children and adolescents from the study.

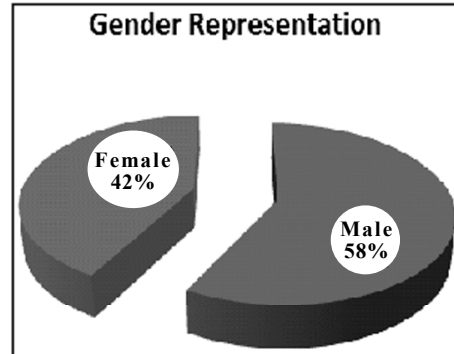
## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- The principal objective of the study is to assess the impact of DTH television on cultural values of the people in Hubli – Dharwad region.
- To find out the relationship between the viewing of television channels

through DTH connection and its implications on socio-cultural norms like food and dress; lifestyle, values related to family, marriage, customs and tradition.

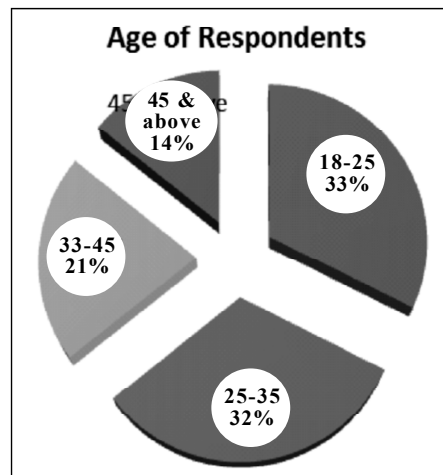
## ANALYSIS

**Graph 1:**  
**Gender Representation**



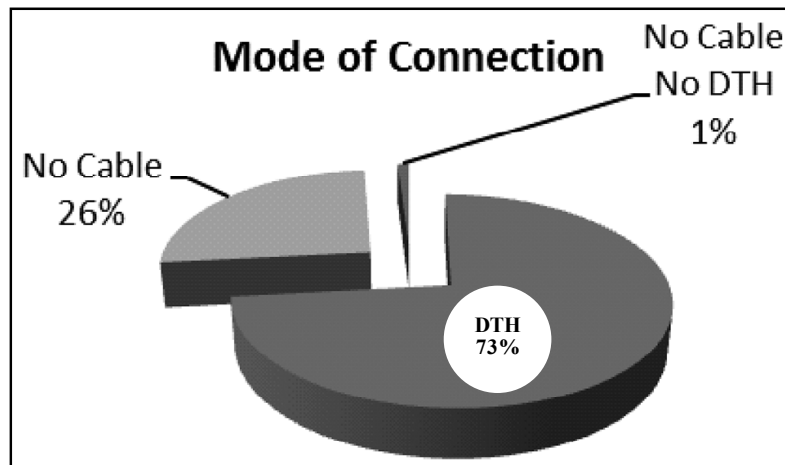
The classification of respondents by their gender shows that, 58.0 percent of the respondents are male and remaining 42.0 percent are female. This shows that though, it is commonly understood that female watch TV more than males, but, because of the social construct in study areas not many female respondents were keen to come out and answer and be a part of this study. Even when female respondents answered many a time, the researcher noted that the male supervised or prompted the answers.

**Graph 2:**  
**Age of Respondents**  
**under the Study**



Looking at the age group of respondents it is clearly evident from Graph 2 that in four class intervals of age group defined viz., 18 to 25, 25 to 35, 35 to 45 and 45 and above respectively, 32.3 percent of respondents are in the age group of 18 to 25 years and 32.0 percent of respondents in the age group of 25 to 35 years. Similarly, 21.3 percent of them are in the age group of 35 to 45 years and 14.3 above 45 years of age. The survey has tried to get representation from all age groups to get viewing habits, choices, and perceptions of different age group in the survey under its purview.

**Graph 3: Mode of Connectivity**

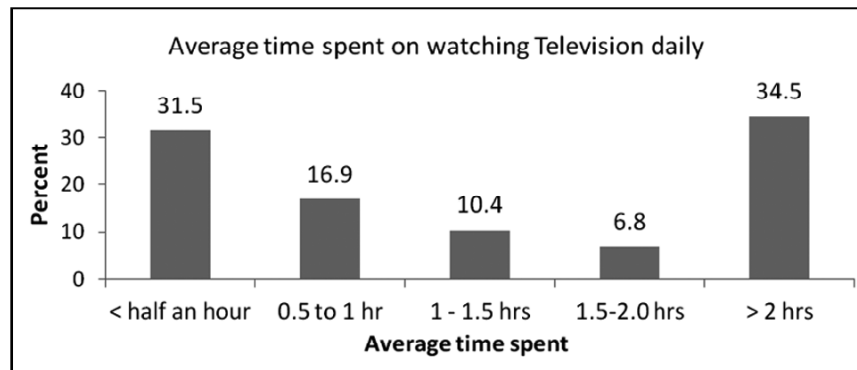


These statistics also point at the fact that, the reliance on DD as primary source of channel for entertainment, news, information have decreased over the years and private channels through means of cable and more recently DTH have taken the prominence. Through field study researcher noticed that, there is a shift from cable to DTH i.e. the homes which had cable connection prior are shifting towards DTH. It is also observed that, the homes which have more proximity to city have cable connections like that in Hubli region than in Dharwad where, more people opted for DTH connections. However, both are twin cities, the geographies differ and thus play an important role in choice of television viewing. Slowly, the trend in DTH is catching up to an extent so much that DTH is television much like Xerox became the identifier for the good old photocopier!



On the issue of average time spent on watching television in a day, it emerges from Graph 4 that 31.5 percent of respondents on an average watch less than half an hour on a given day. Similarly, 16.9 percent of respondents devote about half an hour to one hour to watch television programmes and another 10.1 percent of respondents spend about one to one and half hour in watching their favourite sports programme. Interestingly, about one third (34.5 percent) of respondents under sample study watch more than two hours a day in watching television programmes. The statistics to certain extent give a benchmark in analyzing the impact of television in case study areas. It is widely believed that higher age groups are more likely to spend more time on watching television as compared to lesser age group (youth).

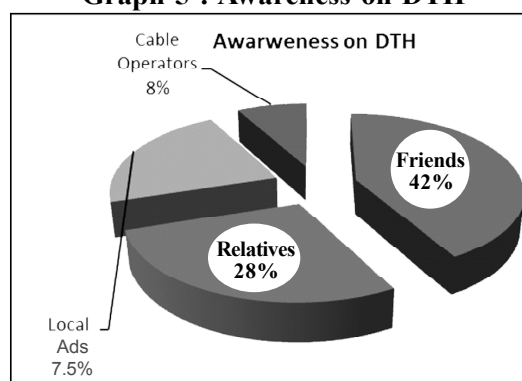
**Graph 4: Time spent on watching Television**



When asked them the source of information to get to know about the concept of DTH service, it emerged that 42.2 percent of respondents (Graph 5) say that they got to know about DTH services through friends and another 28.3 percent of respondents got to know through their relatives. Nearly, one-fourth of respondents (22.1 percent) respondents and another 7.5 percent disclosed that the source of information with regard to availability of DTH facilities was through local advertisement and cable operators. In many a cases, the respondents who have gone to the city would have come across the advertisement and there by prompted for the connection. Through research, it was understood that, for many respondents the DTH connection came as an offer when they acquired new television. The television itself is

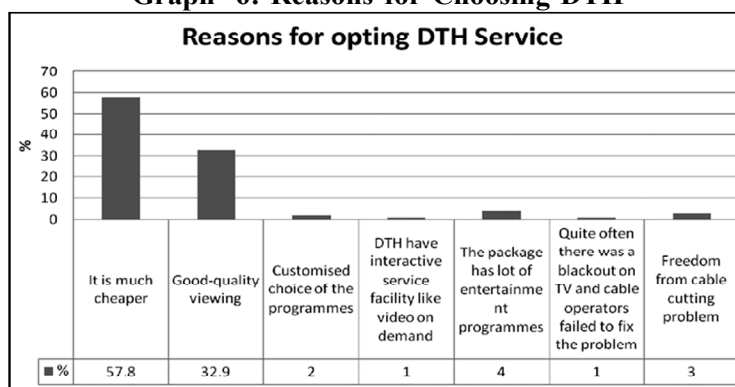
a new phenomenon and their introduction to private channels was through DTH itself. It is also seen that, due to geographical barriers at times the local cable operator himself has suggested the option of DTH. However, the word of mouth has been the biggest publicity for DTH. Where, a suggestion from neighbour or a person you know is valued and trusted than an advertisement in newspaper or on television.

**Graph 5 : Awareness on DTH**



Secondly, answering to the query on the reasons that prompted them to avail the DTH facility, about 58 percent of respondents (Graph 6) said that it is much cheaper in monetary terms in the long run. Similarly, 32.9 percent of respondents informed that because of good quality viewing, they opted for DTH services. Many respondents also felt liberty of payment as and when they have money, which means, there will not be cable operator at their doors every month end to collect the fee.

**Graph 6: Reasons for Choosing DTH**



The DTH provided option to have the set up and recharge whenever they had money. Unlike, cable where the operator will take away the whole set up if monthly remuneration is not paid. Respondents also feel that, DTH have clear quality of picture as opposed to cable where picture quality is jeopardized by tapping here and there. First of all the geography poses a challenge to have cable wire run so long where the picture quality is lost and to add to that problem of tapping. This is not there in DTH. Respondents are of opinion that, the DTH platform gives more liberty in choice of channels as opposed to cable where the choice of channels is at operators wish. Though, the local cable operator goes with the likes of the regional people yet there will be some channels that is of his choice and which may not be watched by respondents but nevertheless the subscription fees are to be borne by the subscribers. The respondents feel that, in rural areas there will be power cut for 6-8 hours and in this time there won't be any transmission and finally when there is power in respondents place, there might not be power elsewhere and hence access to programmes again is disturbed, in DTH this is not so. The DTH provides a way out where, even though the power cut is prevalent the television can still be viewed with inverter being the supplier of the electricity. Surprisingly, few precisely 1 percent of the respondents spoke about interactive services as an option which made them shift from cable to DTH platform. Interestingly, few also find redressal more quick and faster in DTH as compared to cable network. It was known in the survey that, the LCO never turned up after many calls where as the customer service centre atleast took the calls and lodge complaints and few even claimed that their approach to solve problems is faster.

**Table -1 Descriptive Statistics on level of agreement on the coverage of social and cultural programmes with Conditional Access System (DTH channels)**

		DTH channels (in %)					Mode	Sd
		S.D	D	N	A	S.A		
1	More often, I watch programmes aired in recent times	3.0	12.3	28.7	38.3	17.7	4.0	1.02
2	More often, coverage of general news is better	0.7	9.7	24.3	40.3	25.0	4.0	0.95
3	More often, coverage of Sports related events are better	2.7	8.0	28.0	42.0	19.3	4.0	0.96
4	More often, coverage of local based events/ activities are better	1.3	6.0	25.3	42.0	25.3	4.0	0.92
5	More often, coverage of agricultural programmes are better	5.3	19.0	31.0	27.0	17.7	3.0	1.13
6	More often, airing of entertainment based programmes are better	3.3	5.3	32.3	39.0	20.0	4.0	0.96
7	More often, programmes such as health, rural sanitation etc., are aired better	4.7	17.7	30.3	31.0	16.3	4.0	1.09
8	More often, the value based programmes are aired better	7.0	18.3	30.3	27.3	17.0	3.0	1.16
9	More often, educative programme are aired better	2.3	8.0	25.3	45.0	19.3	4.0	0.95
10	More often, stories on politics are better covered	12.0	14.7	18.3	30.0	25.0	4.0	1.33
11	More often, reality shows aired are better	3.0	9.3	25.3	38.3	24.0	4.0	1.03
12	More often, programmes related to astrology, horoscope or any related topics broadcasted	2.0	12.7	29.0	33.3	23.0	4.0	1.03
13	More often Cookery show through DTH have influence on your eating habits	3.3	13.0	31.7	30.3	21.7	3.0	1.07

14	More often, Movies and movie based programmes broadcasted better	2.7	11.0	27.0	40.3	19.0	4.0	1.00
15	More often, Music and related programmes better	1.7	11.3	31.3	37.0	18.7	4.0	0.97
16	More often, Law programmes are better	1.7	7.7	27.0	41.7	22.0	4.0	0.94
17	More often, there has been a change in my traditional menu after watching food channels	2.7	11.0	31.3	38.0	17.0	4.0	0.98
18	More often, news on Science & technology are better	3.3	13.0	31.7	30.3	21.7	4.0	1.01
19	More often, Crime & related stories are better covered	4.7	12.0	31.0	35.3	17.0	4.0	1.06
20	There has been a change in dressing style after watching fashion and other family drama serials	4.3	15.7	26.7	36.0	17.3	4.0	1.08

After briefing on the profile and perception of the respondents relating to reasons for opting DTH services by way of descriptive statistics, this section addresses the defined objectives of the study. In essence, the perception of respondents [through quantitatively] on their Socio Economic and Cultural impact and Changing trend from cable to DTH channels and DTH based programmes in relation to case study areas is being discussed. First, information was gathered on a Likert scale based questions. In other words, the set of relevant questions was based on item scoring pattern. This part of the questionnaire consisted of 20 items related to Socio Cultural impact and Changing trend from Conditional Access System (CAS) to DTH. The Scoring was on a five point Likert ordinal scale from 1 to 5. No reverse scoring item is given in the questionnaire. The pattern is as follows: Strongly Agree – the score is 5, ‘Agree –4’, Neutral– 3, Disagree – 2 and Strongly Disagree -1.

A brief descriptive statistics is provided in Table-1 for those items related to their Socio Economic impact and changing trend from cable to DTH channels and DTH based programmes with similar Likert scale description. The percent of five Likert scale scoring of each item is provided which is self explanatory. Furthermore, Mode and standard deviation is also provided. Accordingly, for the first item, the modal score is 5.0 indicating respondents are strongly agreeing that they are more oriented to watch DTH services with about 73 percent strongly agreeing while only five percent of respondents strongly agreeing they are more interested in watching DD in recent times as compared to DTH aired programmes.

The standard deviation 1.1 indicating the variation is about one mark from each individual respondent's score. Likewise, most of other items have modal score of 5.0 indicating that respondents consent their view with just agreeing and not either strongly agreeing themselves in present context. A similar scenario is observed with respect to coverage of general news. It is again observed that more than three fourth of respondents (76 percent) of them overwhelmingly giving credit to DTH based channels are better while eight percent of respondents strongly agreeing that general news is better in DD channels. Surprisingly, 51 percent of respondents remained neutral while answering this query. This is indicative of the fact that, there are situations where the respondents have stuck to DD news and at times have wavered to private channel broadcast through DTH. It was observed through field study that, many a time people even though watched news of private channels, they would still wait for news on DD to find out the accuracy of the news telecast on private channels.

However, on aspects namely programmes such as health, rural sanitation, value based programmes and educative programme, it was said that, DD aired better programmes where nearly 70 percent of respondents strongly agreeing while only about 25 percent of respondents strongly agreeing for DTH based channels. Again, the same scenario is observed with respect to airing of agricultural based programmes, it is the DD channels, which are ahead in terms of percentage of people strongly agreeing as compared to

DTH channels. This point to the fact that, even today with respect to specific areas people trust DD than any other private channels. Given the rural set up and agriculture the primary occupation, farmers rely on agricultural news. This is broadcast in DD Chandana in regional language, Kannada. Therefore, for most respondents with farming background any information related to agriculture was equal to DD in itself. It can be said here that in many areas of education, health and informative programmes, DD still ranks among the top.

## **CONCLUSION**

Television has an influencing role on people as it can stir the sensation of emotions among them. Today, DTH industry is mainly focusing upon increasing customer base and average revenue per users (ARPU). On one hand, DTH operators are focusing on domestic customers. The Indian DTH sector is passing through a dynamic transformational phase, as it is undergoing the operation of market forces of demand and supply. The respondents in the study area though accepted the changes that are brought in by DTH this change are not just associated with science and technology but also changes in human nature and behavior as such. It is in economic terms that we talk growth but when we talk of development it is holistic in nature and what DTH has done to society is making space for a fusion of traditional with modern ideas. The adaptability and acceptability of new thinking, new lifestyle, and western ideas are some of the aspects that respondents were vocal about. The primary data based on statistical analysis shows that, the influence of DTH on the respondents of the study area is visible whether male or female from any age group. What is known through the study that, the eating habits of the local people are slowly seeing a change so also is their sense of dressing. The exchange of words and their behavior everything is seeing a change, which is seeping in making it as a part of the existing culture. As Arvind Singhal et. al. (2006) points out, media programs can facilitate social change by stimulating the development of social capital in community.

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